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CITY OF SOUTH BEND
PETE BUTTIGIEG, MAYOR
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Control

Mr. Bruno Pigott, IDEM Commissioner,
100 N Senate Ave.,
Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Ms. Cathy Stepp, USEPA Region 5 Administrator,
USEPA Region 5,
77 West Jackson Boulevard,
(Mail Code: R- 19J),
Chicago, IL 60604-3507.

March 5, 2018

Dear Commissioner Pigott, Administrator Stepp,
Similar to many U.S. cities, we in South Bend have a combined sewer system and have been implementing a long-term control plan in an attempt to minimize the environmental impact to the St. Joseph River. Faced with enormous and escalating costs and the unprecedented and unsustainable financial impact on our community of this project, we have taken an innovative and unique approach and reevaluated the solution.
As a result of this improved approach, we have been operating what we believe (and has been recognized by USEPA) to be the most densely sensorized sewer system in the United States. The City has gathered a tremendous amount of sewer and rain data over the past several years. Using that data and a real-time control system, we are able to maximize the amount of flow that goes to our treatment plant while minimizing the amount of flow overflowing to the river during rain events. This "Smart Sewer" system has enabled the City to reduce combined sewer overflow (CSO) volume to the St. Joseph River by more than 70%, which amounts to over 1 billion gallons of combined sewer a year. We have achieved this improvement in river water quality at a fraction of the cost of the traditional "grey infrastructure" that is currently memorialized in the South Bend Long-Term Control Plan consent decree.

Advancing this smart sewer approach and combining it with an expanded plan for green stormwater infrastructure and a reduced plan for unnecessary grey infrastructure will lessen the plan costs while also eliminating large-scale construction projects that are disruptive to our City's population. This reduction in plan costs will help alleviate the burden on our already stressed low-income population. Moreover, when completed, this smart sewer plan will effectively achieve the anticipated water quality objectives for the St. Joseph River but will do so in a fashion that South Bend can actually afford.


I would very much like to invite you both to South Bend so that I may personally give you a tour of our City and show you the incredible progress we have made with our CSO program and the Smart Sewer system that we believe sets us apart from other CSO cities. I would like to present our new, proposed, effective, and affordable long-term control plan. I believe that your first-hand review of this endeavor will best help you to see not only how South Bend is solving this massive issue, but also demonstrate how every other "rust-belt" city in America could improve regional water quality at far less cost and disruption. I suggest the following as suitable dates:

Thursday, April 19th in the morning (8am-1pm)

Tuesday, May 15th in the afternoon (12-5pm)

Monday, May 21st (8am-1pm)

Sincerely,



Pete Buttigieg
Mayor